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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
7 November 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
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HIGHLIGHTS

Recent photography has disclosed at least eight new SAM sites in North Vietnam, five of which are in the Haiphong area. US aircraft continue to strike operational SAM sites and successfully damaged two of them and a SAM support facility on 7 November. In South Vietnam, fighting in the Plei Me area erupted again after a four-day lull when a Viet Cong force ambushed a company of the US 1st Cavalry Division.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

A sharp engagement between US and Viet Cong forces erupted yesterday when the Communists ambushed a company of the US 1st Cavalry Division about eight miles west of Plei Me (Para. 1). Twelve Guam-based B-52 Stratofortresses bombed a Viet Cong base and storage area about 52 miles south of Saigon last night (Para. 2). US planes mistakenly dropped bombs on a friendly village near Chu Lai (Para. 3). A village in Pleiku Province was attacked by two Viet Cong companies on 5 November (Para. 4). Two Viet Cong base camps were discovered by US forces in Binh Duong Province (Para. 5). The final result of a 25-day US security operation southeast of An Khe are reported (Para. 7).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

Premier Ky late last week devoted a full day to further discussions with leaders of South Vietnam's major trade union, apparently impressing them with his ability to grasp their point of view (Para. 1).

Ky continues to play up the recurrent theme of "liberating" North Vietnam (Para. 3).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

A number of new SAM sites have been confirmed in recent photography, five of which are in the Haiphong area alone (Para. 1). US air strikes were conducted

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against two SAM sites and a SAM support facility on 7 November (Para. 2). Two US helicopters on search and rescue operations were lost over North Vietnam on 6 and 7 November (Para. 3).

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ROLLING THUNDER 38 conducted between 29 October and 4 November is summarized (Paras. 5-8).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
Nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: North Vietnamese propaganda continues to highlight the various Vietnam protest activities in the United States and is depicting them as signs of "the deep hatred of the American people for the ruling circles' war policy" (Para. 1). Hanoi's treatment of the Soviet October Revolution celebration was routine. A Soviet deputy premier in Moscow reaffirmed the Soviet intention to continue supporting the DRV both politically and militarily (Paras. 2 and 3).

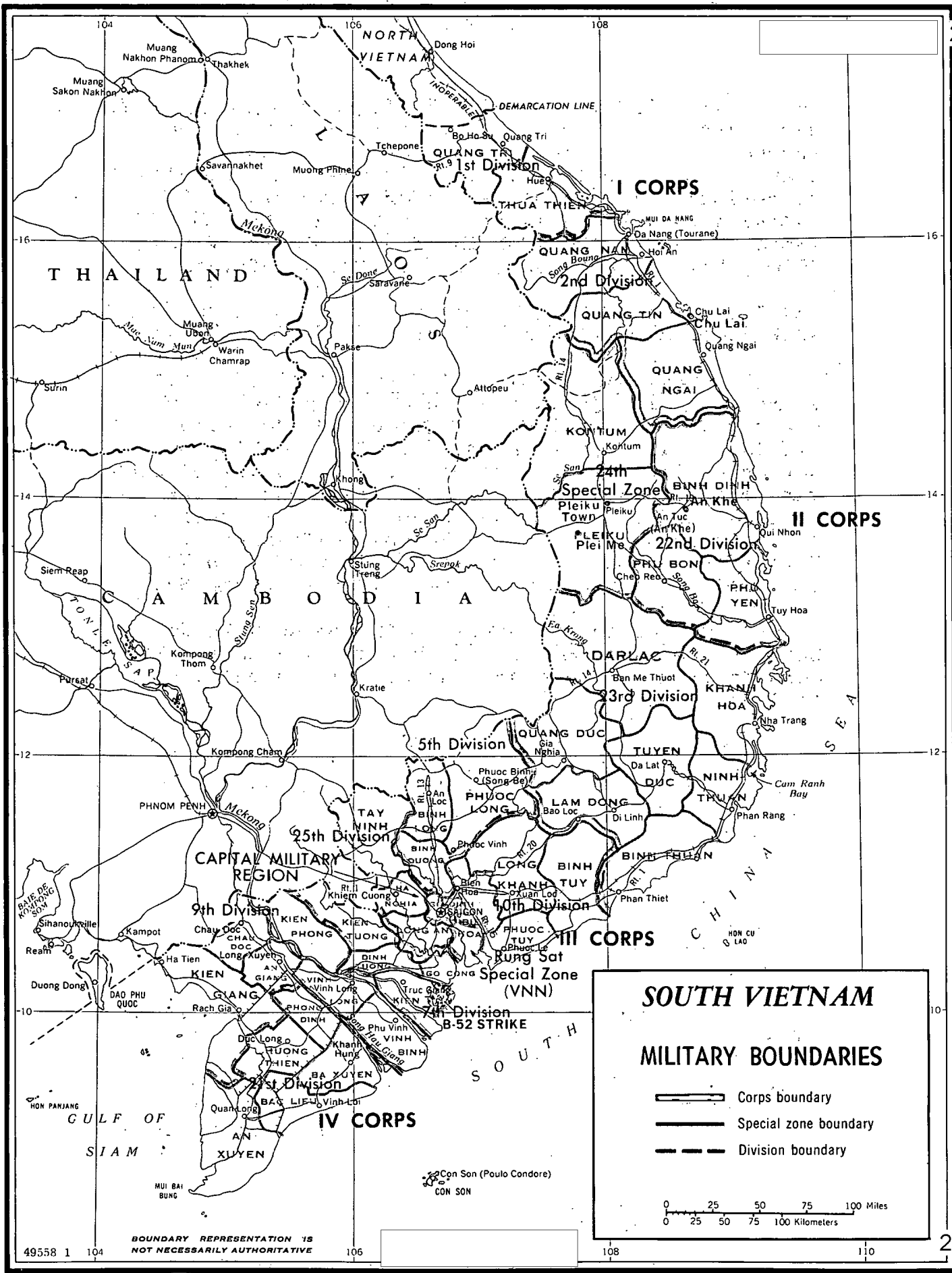
VI. Other Major Aspects: Preliminary talks between the Viet Cong and Cambodian officials concerning trade in rice and rubber have recently come to light [redacted]

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. A sharp engagement which erupted yesterday between US and Communist forces some eight miles west of Plei Me has broken a four-day lull in significant ground fighting. The action was touched off when an unreported number of Communist troops ambushed a company of the US 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile). The US contingent suffered 26 killed and 55 wounded in heavy fighting before reinforcements could be brought into the area. Air and artillery support was precluded in the early stages of the engagement by the close-quarter nature of the fighting. Initial Viet Cong casualties are reported as 56 killed (body count), ten machine guns, and one PAVN 2nd Lieutenant captured. Reinforced US troops are still sweeping the area and the fighting is reported to be continuing.

2. Twelve Guam-based B-52 Stratofortresses bombed a Viet Cong base and storage area some 52 miles south of Saigon last night. Preliminary reports on a ground follow-up operation conducted by two ARVN battalions include one Viet Cong killed, 20 Viet Cong suspects detained, and 500 refugees evacuated.

3. US Navy planes mistakenly dropped eight bombs on a friendly village just west of Chu Lai yesterday. A US Marine patrol on the scene requested air evacuation of ten civilians, but the number killed, if any, is unknown.

4. An estimated two Viet Cong companies attacked a village in Pleiku Province on 5 November. Casualties among the two platoons defending the village included six killed and two missing. Viet Cong losses are unknown.

5. Elements of the US 1st Infantry Division discovered two Viet Cong base camps on 5 November, while on a search and destroy operation in Binh Duong Province. One of the camps contained an extensive tunnel complex and an underground aid station.

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Large quantities of medical supplies, including penicillin and malaria tablets, were recovered. Five Viet Cong have been killed in this operation thus far. Friendly casualties are described as light.

6. A one-day ARVN search-and-destroy operation in Long An Province terminated on 5 November with 12 Viet Cong killed (body count), five captured, and four individual weapons and 40 grenades seized. Friendly forces suffered no casualties.

7. Final results of a 25-day security operation conducted just southeast of An Khe by one battalion of the US 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) show nine Viet Cong confirmed killed, 62 believed killed, 53 captured, and 11 tons of rice seized. US losses were six killed and 23 wounded. Operation BLACK FERRET, a two-day combined USMC/ARVN search-and-destroy operation south of Chu Lai, resulted in two Viet Cong killed and 17 captured. Eight US were wounded, but there were no ARVN casualties.

8. According to unconfirmed press reports, a North Vietnamese political commissar claiming to be a member of the 2nd Battalion of the PAVN 101st Regiment surrendered with his documents and weapons to an American unit near Plei Me on 7 November. The commissar claimed that his battalion infiltrated into the area around Pleiku some six months ago and since that time had been operating from a base camp near the Cambodian border.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The US Embassy reports that Premier Ky late last week devoted a full day to further meetings with leaders of South Vietnam's leading labor union, the CVT. This time, in addition to the CVT's Saigon leaders, CVT President Tran Quoc Buu participated, as did the prefect of Saigon and other government aides. According to Buu, Premier Ky, after initial reserve, warmed up considerably to the CVT's arguments that it sought no special favors, but only government acceptance as a popular organization capable of playing a significant role in society and in the war effort. Buu appeared singularly impressed by Ky's apparent sincerity, as well as his quick grasp of labor problems discussed, and instinctive sense of how to solve them.

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3. Saigon's ruling generals evidently continue to play up the theme of eventual recovery of North Vietnam. According to press reports, Premier Ky, on a visit Friday to the US 1st Cavalry Headquarters, told a North Vietnamese prisoner captured in Pleiku that he would take him back home when we "liberate the North." On the return trip helicopters escorting the premier reportedly received Viet Cong ground fire, but none of the helicopters carrying Ky and other top officers was hit.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. North Vietnam's SAM defenses continue to increase. Photography [] has disclosed five new SAM sites under construction in the Haiphong area, another new one north of Hanoi near Thai Nguyen, and two new ones in the Thanh Hoa area. In addition, photography indicates that SAM sites may also be under construction at two other locations near Haiphong. The continuing site construction suggests that North Vietnam will receive additional missile equipment. It has never been firmly established just how much missile equipment is in North Vietnam, but it is certain that the number of sites continue to outnumber the amount of available equipment. Probably less than one third of the known sites are fully equipped and operational at any one time. The confirmed sites now number 40.

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2. A number of strikes against SAM sites and facilities were conducted this weekend. On 7 November SAM site 20 near Phu Ly was attacked by four F4C Phantoms and was partially destroyed. In the Thanh Hoa area navy A4E Skyhawks attacked two SAM sites. One of these was a new site first detected in photography [] the other was site 23. At site 23 two missiles were seen burning in their revetments and the radar vans were damaged. Limited damage was inflicted on the new site with two missiles left burning there. One of the A4Es was hit by ground fire during the attack but the pilot ejected over water and was later recovered. Twenty F-105 Thunderchiefs attacked the SAM support facility near Dong Em. Pilots reported two secondary explosions but damage assessment was hampered by dust and smoke. No aircraft were lost in this attack. In other air action 14 F-105 Thunderchiefs attacked the Phu Ly railroad bridge on 7 November. Smoke and dust prevented a good assessment of the results but the north end of the bridge was damaged.

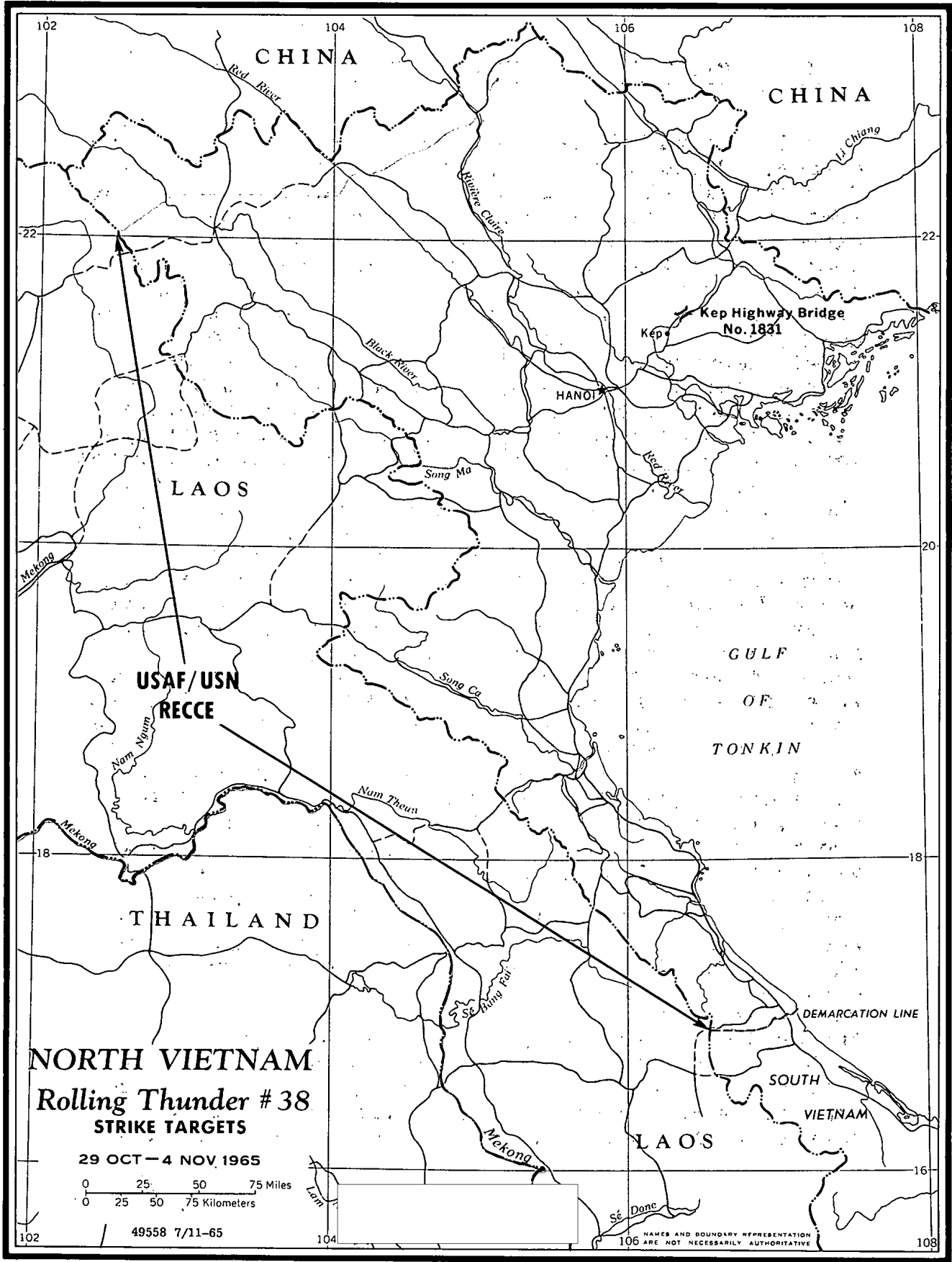
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3. Two helicopters performing search and rescue operations were lost over North Vietnam. One helicopter which was attempting to locate the crewmen of

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the F-105 which was downed by a missile on 5 November was hit by tracers which ignited the fuel. The crew of four bailed out. One member of the crew was rescued the next day. The fate of the other three is unknown. On 7 November another helicopter was hit by ground fire about 40 miles west of Thanh Hoa. A controlled landing was made. All of the four crew members were rescued and the damaged helicopter was destroyed.

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The North Vietnamese news agency claimed that a US helicopter had been shot down but made no mention that it was done by a MIG. The rescued crewman of the helicopter shot down on 6 November indicated that it was ground fire which brought it down and made no mention of seeing any North Vietnamese aircraft. The pilot of a US jet operating in conjunction with the helicopter also made no mention of seeing a North Vietnamese aircraft.

5. ROLLING THUNDER 38, conducted from 29 October through 4 November, consisted almost entirely of armed reconnaissance missions along lines of communication in the DRV. This has been the predominant pattern of all ROLLING THUNDER operations since August of this year. Armed reconnaissance sorties perform a twofold function: first, to restrike and maintain inoperative, designated targets previously attacked; and second, to inhibit movement on lines of communication.

6. Only one major target in this past week's schedule--the Kep highway bridge--was attacked. The attack on 31 October completely destroyed the bridge and provoked a spirited defensive effort on the part

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of the Vietnamese. At least thirteen surface-to-air missiles were unsuccessfully fired at US aircraft. In turn, US planes reportedly inflicted heavy damage to three SAM sites in the vicinity of Kep.

7. Only one leaflet drop was conducted during the past week. A US C-130 conducted a special good-will mission on 2 November, dropping 5,000 packages plus newspapers in the coastal area between Vinh and Dong Hoi.

8. Nine US aircraft and two helicopters were lost during this past week's operations, with five aircraft and the two helicopters lost during the last three days. The total number of US aircraft lost through 7 November stands at 151.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

- 1. Nothing of significance to report.**

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. North Vietnamese propaganda continues to emphasize the various Vietnam protest activities throughout the US, especially the recent self-immolation in Washington, and to portray them as signs of "the deep hatred of the American people for the ruling circles' war policy." A party daily editorial on 6 November attempted to establish an identity of interest between the American demonstrators and the Vietnamese Communists. It praised attempts to subvert the draft, burn draft cards, and asserted that those Americans who have volunteered to give blood to their "Vietnamese friends" are resolved "not to take arms under the banner of aggression," but "are carrying aloft the yellow starred flag of Vietnam and the blue and red flag of the NFLSV in the heart of American cities."

2. Hanoi celebrated the 48th anniversary of the Russian October Revolution with a spate of routine propaganda and public statements praising the development of the Soviet Union and the assistance that it has rendered to the DRV in its struggle against "US imperialism." A message from Ho Chi Minh and other North Vietnamese officials to the Soviet leadership on 6 November took note of the "active support" that the Soviets had given to the Vietnamese people in the past and of the "great and invaluable sympathy, support, and assistance" that the party people and government of the Soviet Union are now rendering to the DRV. A rally in Hanoi on the sixth of November and a party daily editorial the following day also expressed similar gratitude for Soviet assistance.

3. In Moscow, Soviet First Deputy Premier Polyansky, in the major anniversary address, reaffirmed the Soviet Union's intention to give the DRV "its full political support and the necessary economic and military aid."

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VI. OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

1. Preliminary talks between the Viet Cong and Cambodian officials concerning trade in rice and rubber have recently come to light. In a 1 November public work session in Phnom Penh, dealing with economic problems, Prince Sihanouk indicated that the Viet Cong had approached Cambodian economic chief Son Sann in an effort to buy Cambodian rice. Without indicating whether any decision had been made on this overture, Sihanouk said that the illicit traffic in rice from Cambodia to South Vietnam--where the price of rice is much higher--was resulting in a considerable loss of revenue to the government. Acknowledging that both Cambodian civilian and military officials were implicated in this trade, Sihanouk asked that measures be implemented to prevent "rice from leaving our country."

2. At the same work session, leftist minister Chau Seng claimed that he had been approached by a certain "Vietnamese representative" who wanted to sell rubber to Cambodia. He indicated, with Sihanouk's apparent approval, that negotiations between the Vietnamese and Son Sann would be conducted after the latter's return from a forthcoming trip to Europe.

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